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REMARKS

This Amendment Under 37 CFR §1.116 is being filed in response to the Final Office Action dated December 2, 2005. For the following reasons, this application should be considered in condition for allowance and the case passed to issue.

The allowance of claims 9-15 is gratefully acknowledged. Claims 13 and 19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but considered allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, it is respectfully noted that claims 9-15 were allowed, and claim 13 falls within this range of allowed claims. Therefore, the objection to claim 13 appears to be an inadvertent error and will be treated as such since claim 13 is no longer dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Claim 19 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1-8 have been cancelled. The only remaining rejections include those of claims 16-18. Please note that claim 20 is dependent from claim 19 and therefore should also be considered allowable since it further depends from and limits claim 19 as amended.

Claim 16 as amended relates to a semiconductor arrangement comprising a main die area, and a surrounding area circumferentially surrounding the main die area. Crack stop elements are provided in the surrounding area, these crack stop elements including dummy vias. In certain embodiments, the surrounding area is a scribe line monitor area. None of the references, either alone or in combination, show or suggest the claimed invention. Claim 16-18 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the background of invention (BOI) and Adkisson. This rejection has been obviated by the amendments made to the claims as well as for the following reasons given below.

Claim 16 as amended requires that the crack stop elements that are located in the surrounding area include dummy vias. The Examiner concedes that the BOI fails to teach crack

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stop elements in the surrounding area that circumferentially surrounds a main die area. However, the Examiner considered Adkisson as teaching crack stops 30 in the surrounding area. Further, the Examiner stated that the crack stop elements included dummy vias/holes and referred to Figure 4. It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has misidentified elements 22, 26 as dummy vias, as that term is understood in the art and as defined in the specification. For example, in paragraph 23, line 1, dummy vias 24 are termed "dummy" since they are not electrically connected to functioning circuitry.

Although the Examiner states that Adkisson discloses dummy vias, this does not actually appear to be supported by the specification of Adkisson. Structure 22 is described as merged connections in the form of local interconnects and/or vias while 26 is shown as a contact that provides a thermal path. There is no disclosure of a dummy via as the term is employed in the present invention. Accordingly, claim 16, which has been amended to include a limitation of the crack stop elements include dummy vias, should be considered patentable over the combination of BOI and Adkisson. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 16 and 18 under 35 USC §103(a) are respectfully requested.

Claim 19 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, since this claim is indicated as allowable, claim 19 should be allowed over the art of record. Similarly, claim 20, which depends from and further defines claim 19 as amended, should also be allowed.

In light of the amendments and remarks above, this application should be considered in condition for allowance and the case passed to issue. If there are any questions regarding this request for reconsideration or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated to expedite the prosecution of the application.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 502624 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted.

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